of the Oachira festival when they flocked in large numbers to the great inconvenience of the large concourse of the Hindu worshippers and were a menace to public health. The Member prayed that the construction of the Leper Asylum might be treated as an urgent matter by Government.

Dewan's reply.—In regard to the Veterinary Hospital, the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries says that there is no necessity for a Hospital at Kayankulam and that the needs of the Station could be met by the touring Veterinary Assistant. I shall ask the Director to see that the touring Assistant visits Kayankulam every month, and spends a certain number of days there. This officer will spend four or five days at Kayankulam every month and people who own cattle could go to him then.

With regard to the Leper Asylum, I am decidedly of the opinion that there is no need for one at Kayankulam. We are maintaining a big Leper Asylum at Trivandrum at great cost and we are ready to take in as many people there as may come. We are teaching them some vocations also so as to make them useful to themselves and happy for the rest of their lives, as far as it lies in our power. Under the amended Lepers Regulation, lepers can be compelled to go to the Asylum, so that if you find a leper in the streets roaming about and begging, you have only to inform the nearest Magistrate or Police Officer, who will take steps to send him to the Asylum. There are also two grant-in-aid hospitals for lepers, one at Alleppey and the other at Neyyur.

103. Some needs of the Kottayam Municipality.

Mr. M. Joseph (Member, Municipal Council, Kottayan) submitted that the town of Kottayam had only 15 miles of road, while for the same extent Trivandrum had 28, Alleppey 24, and Quilon 19 miles of road. But if the portions of the Main Central and Peermade roads passing through the town were excluded, the town had only one road worth mentioning, viz., the one leading to Tazhattangadi. The lanes that served the other parts of the town were so narrow that along most of them two people could not walk abreast. In the matter of traffic, the town held a peculiar position, being the highway for all commerce between Alleppey and the planting hills in the east. Motor cars, bullock carts, and pedestrians attending courts and markets crowded the few roads in the town throughout the day, the student population nearly seven or eight thousand strong adding to the congestion. No part of Travancore, excepting perhaps certain portions of Nagercoil, stood in more urgent need of additional roads than Kottayam. The Member urged that these roads should be provided from the general revenues. The price of land in the town amounted to nearly Rs. 150 per cent, so that the balance of funds available to the Council would not suffice even for the payment of compensation for the lands acquired. At least 15 miles of additional road were immediately necessary to relieve the congestion. Half the estimated cost might be granted to the Municipal Council as a Government contribution, while the other half might be given as a loan to be repaid by the Council in easy instalments. As to the new roads to be taken up, the most urgent ones were two roads to run parallel to the Kanjikuzhi road, which was the most congested road in the town. The Member then urged the necessity for an inspecting officer to control and guide the activities of the Municipalities along uniform lines, until all the Municipalities of the State so far advanced in public usefulness as to make other towns appreciate the benefits of having a Municipality. He also prayed for the appointment of Municipal Secretaries.

Dewan's reply.—You have spoken about the necessity for an Inspector for the inspection of Municipalities. As regards this, my reply to another Member was that, in my opinion, the appointment of an Inspector was needless. You say that the Municipalities here are infant bodies in the matter of civic administration and require to be educated, that a certain amount of uniformity is necessary and that, in Madras, where Municipalities are far more advanced, there is an Inspector. I may tell you that the post of Inspector of Municipalities in Madras was created only for a year.

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Member.—We also want such an officer only temporarily.

Dewan.—My chief objection to that appointment is this. Government are intending to make Municipal Councils essentially non-official bodies. I do not want to officialise these bodies by putting an official over them for criticising them and dictating to them. You can soon become adults in this matter in a much more satisfactory and acceptable manner, by holding periodical Conferences. I do not see why Municipal Presidents, mostly non-officials, should not meet in Conference once a a year. Government would be glad to depute an experienced officer to be present at such Conferences and, if possible, I should myself like to be present on such occasions. You will be in your own place there. You will not feel the presence of an official over you, and the object that you want to achieve could be equally well achieved in that way. There is the question of expenditure which I mentioned, but that is only a secondary matter. I may also tell you that, although the Municipalities of Madras are older, the people there are not so well educated as you are.

In regard to the appointment of a Municipal Secretary, that is a question of detail. If any Municipal Council thinks that it should have a full-time Secretary, it can well have it, provided there is need for it and funds are available. In regard to roads, it is true Government have enunciated a policy differentiating main roads from village roads. That policy has not yet materialised. I find that there are a number of difficulties in giving practical effect to it. If you want to manage the main roads also, you must submit definite proposals. You must ask your Council to formulate a definite programme, and see what it is going to cost and how you are going to meet the expenditure.

104. Some requirements of the town of Alleppey.

Mr. M. L. Janardanan Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Alleppey) began by complaining that the fire-engine kept at Alleppey was useless and that it failed to work when required. He reiterated the points urged in his last year's representation regarding the absence of shipping facilities at Alleppey and the consequent loss and trouble to which the merchants were put, and said that Government had not realised the seriousness of the situation. Year after year the direct foreign trade of Travancore so essential for her prosperity was declining and the history of ports all over the world would illustrate that, if once trade was allowed to drift, it would not be easy to restore it. By shipping at Alleppey in preference to Cochin, the merchants would save about Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 a ton in the shape of shipping charges, and the port would also derive a good income. All that was required to be done was to provide the necessary boats and one steam tug with a boat basin where the tug could be moved safely during the monsoon. The investment on these would repay the Government several times over and there would also be no objection to Government levying a reasonable cess from the merchants after affording them the necessary facilities. These matters were discussed sometime ago at a conference of merchants, called by the Principal Port Officer, and the latter had submitted a report to Government. It was high time that the Government did something in this matter.

The Member next referred to the question of opening a State Bank and to the valuable report submitted by Mr. R. Nilakanda Pillai. He said that he had made a representation to Government on this subject so far back as 1908 and had again urged the necessity of having a State Bank at the fourteenth session of the Assembly. The Indian trader suffered heavily for want of financial facilities. Apart from the capital which each trader might invest, there were only two other sources to which he could turn for help, viz., the Imperial Bank and the local hundi merchant. Only business men having large dealings were generally taken in as the *clientele* of the Bank, which also made a distinction between the European and the Indian merchant. As the Imperial Bank did not generally help Indian trade and industries, the Government should discontinue their help to that institution and open a State Bank in its place. The merchants were really grateful to Government for having taken up the subject for their anxious consideration and he requested them to speed up the proposal and give effect to it without delay.

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